

OURAY RANDLETT NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY TO CONSTRUCT RACEWAY AND SETTLING BASIN

BIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Prepared using IPaC

Generated by Zane Olsen (zane_olsen@fws.gov)

May 9, 2024

The purpose of this document is to assess the effects of the proposed project and determine whether the project may affect any federally threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species. If appropriate for the project, this document may be used as a biological assessment (BA), as it is prepared in accordance with legal requirements set forth under [Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act \(16 U.S.C. 1536 \(c\)\)](#).

In this document, any data provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is based on data as of April 26, 2024.

Prepared using IPaC version 6.108.2-rc1

OURAY RANDLETT NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY TO CONSTRUCT RACEWAY AND SETTLING BASIN BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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1 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

1.1 PROJECT NAME

Ouray Randlett National Fish Hatchery to Construct Raceway and Settling Basin

1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this proposed action is to construct a new Raceway and Settling Basin to support the continuation of fish production for endangered fish species recovery in the Colorado river system. This project will increase biosecurity and help protect endangered species at the Ouray National Fish Hatchery. An additional benefit would be to reroute discharge water from the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge, Leota Unit, to allow for periodic desiccation of floodplain wetlands. At present, discharge water is directed at the unit resulting in permanent, perennial emergent wetland habitat. Floodplain wetlands require periodic drawdowns for proper hydrologic function.

1.3 EFFECT DETERMINATION SUMMARY

SPECIES (COMMON NAME) OR CRITICAL HABITAT	SCIENTIFIC NAME	LISTING STATUS	PRESENT IN ACTION AREA	EFFECT DETERMINATION
Black-footed Ferret	Mustela nigripes	Experimental Population, Non-Essential	Excluded from analysis	Excluded from analysis
Bonytail	Gila elegans	Endangered	No	NE
Colorado Pikeminnow	Ptychocheilus lucius	Endangered	No	NE
Humpback Chub	Gila cypha	Threatened	No	NE
Monarch Butterfly	Danaus plexippus	Candidate	Excluded from analysis	Excluded from analysis
Razorback Sucker	Xyrauchen texanus	Endangered	No	NE
Uinta Basin Hookless Cactus	Sclerocactus wetlandicus	Threatened	No	NE
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Coccyzus americanus	Threatened	Yes	NLAA
Colorado Pikeminnow critical habitat	Ptychocheilus lucius	Final	No	NE
Razorback Sucker critical habitat	Xyrauchen texanus	Final	No	NE
Yellow-billed Cuckoo critical habitat	Coccyzus americanus	Final	Yes	NE

1.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.4.1 LOCATION



LOCATION

Uintah County, Utah

1.4.2 DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT HABITAT

HABITATS FOR NUMEROUS WILDLIFE SPECIES, INCLUDING SMALL MAMMALS, VARIOUS SPECIES OF RODENTS AND BATS, MIGRATORY BIRDS, RAPTORS, HERPTILES, AND AQUATIC SPECIES, OCCUR ON OURAY NWR. THESE SPECIES OCCUPY THE AREA ON A YEAR-ROUND OR SEASONAL BASIS. SPECIES' OCCURRENCES ARE TYPICALLY DEPENDENT ON HABITAT AVAILABILITY, CARRYING CAPACITIES, AND THE DEGREE OF EXISTING HABITAT QUALITY.

SMALL MAMMALS FOUND IN OURAY NWR INCLUDE THE WHITE-TAILED JACKRABBIT, BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT, COYOTE, BADGER, STRIPED SKUNK, NORTHERN RIVER OTTER, AMERICAN BEAVER, AND VARIOUS SPECIES OF RODENTS, FOXES, AND BATS. LARGE NON-GAME MAMMALS THAT ARE OCCASIONALLY OBSERVED ON THE REFUGE INCLUDE MOOSE, BLACK BEAR, AND MOUNTAIN LION. BIRD SPECIES THAT MAY BE PRESENT INCLUDE THE BLACK-THROATED SPARROW, SAY'S PHOEBE, FERRUGINOUS HAWK, BREWER'S SPARROW, SAGE SPARROW, GRASSHOPPER SPARROW, AND HORNED LARK.

HERPTILES POTENTIALLY FOUND IN THE REGION INCLUDE THE WANDERING GARTER SNAKE, GREAT BASIN GOPHER SNAKE, WESTERN RATTLESNAKE, NORTHERN LEOPARD FROG, WESTERN WHIPTAIL, SAGEBRUSH LIZARD, AND SHORT-HORNED LIZARD.

SOME 237 SPECIES OF MIGRATORY BIRDS HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED TO VISIT OURAY NWR AS SEASONAL RESIDENTS OR MIGRANTS, 114 OF WHICH ARE KNOWN TO NEST WITHIN THE REFUGE. POTENTIAL OCCURRENCE IS BASED ON HABITAT (VEGETATION) TYPES AND THE BIRD SPECIES THAT TEND TO USE THESE HABITAT TYPES. (NOTE: MOST SPECIES USE MORE THAN ONE HABITAT). MIGRATING BIRDS OFTEN HAVE SPECIAL HABITAT NEEDS.

TWENTY-TWO SPECIES OF RAPTORS ARE KNOWN TO OCCUR WITHIN THE PROJECT AREA AND SURROUNDING REGION YEAR- ROUND OR ON A SEASONAL BASIS. THESE INCLUDE THE BALD EAGLE, GOLDEN EAGLE, FERRUGINOUS HAWK, RED-TAILED HAWK, SWAINSON'S HAWK, COOPER'S HAWK, SHARP- SHINNED HAWK, OSPREY, NORTHERN GOSHAWK, NORTHERN HARRIER, PRAIRIE FALCON, MERLIN, PEREGRINE FALCON, TURKEY VULTURE, AMERICAN KESTREL, GREAT-HORNED OWL, BURROWING OWL, SHORT-EARED OWL, LONG-EARED OWL, WESTERN SCREECH-OWL, NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL, AND ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK. MOST RAPTOR SPECIES USING THE AREA MIGRATE EACH FALL AND RETURN TO THE REGION AGAIN THE FOLLOWING SPRING. EXCEPTIONS INCLUDE THE GOLDEN EAGLE, BALD EAGLE, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, AND GREAT HORNED OWL, WHICH ARE YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS.

THE GREEN RIVER, IMMEDIATELY UPSTREAM AND DOWNSTREAM OF THE PROJECT AREA, IS HOST TO 10 NATIVE FISH SPECIES: ROUNDTAIL CHUB, BONYTAIL CHUB, COLORADO PIKEMINNOW, HUMPBACK CHUB, SPECKLED DACE, BLUEHEAD SUCKER, FLANNELMOUTH SUCKER, RAZORBACK SUCKER, MOTTLED SCULPIN, AND BROOK STICKLEBACK. REPRESENTATIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES IN THE GREEN RIVER IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROJECT AREA INCLUDE THE GREEN SUNFISH, SMALLMOUTH BASS, WALLEYE, CHANNEL CATFISH, BLACK BULLHEAD, NORTHERN PIKE, FATHEAD MINNOW, COMMON CARP, AND RED SHINER.

1.4.3 PROJECT PROPONENT INFORMATION

Provide information regarding who is proposing to conduct the project, and their contact information. Please provide details on whether there is a Federal nexus.

REQUESTING AGENCY

Department of Interior

FULL NAME

Zane Olsen

STREET ADDRESS

1380 S. 2350 W.

CITY

Vernal

STATE

UT

ZIP

84078

PHONE NUMBER

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E-MAIL ADDRESS

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LEAD AGENCY

Lead agency is the same as requesting agency

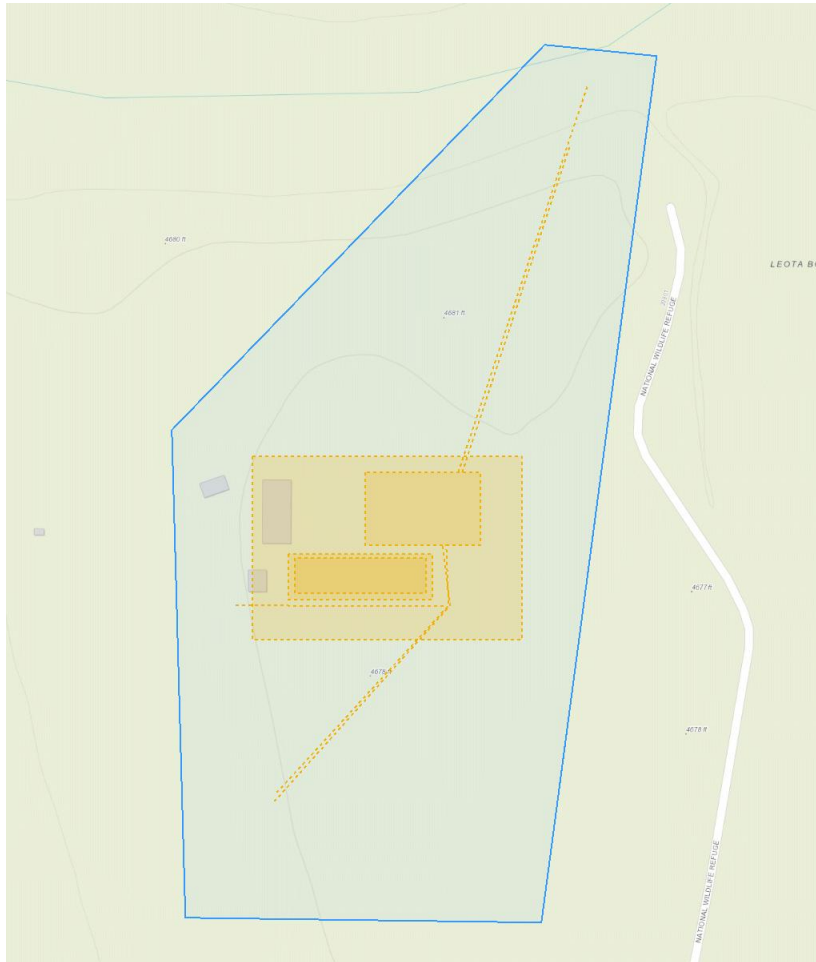
1.4.4 PROJECT PURPOSE

Raceway Overview A dual-raceway system would greatly benefit ONFH. It would be used as an intermittent holding location between the ponds and hatchery building. The raceway would be used for treatments, sorting, and sampling before fish enter the hatchery building. This would decrease the risk of infecting the building with parasites/diseases and adding organic load to the filters. The raceway outflow would enter the Settling Basin and decreases the risk of Aquatic Invasive Species and nascent species from entering the main production areas. **Settling Basin Overview** The current outflow structures drain from the ponds/hatchery building in two separate pipes. Both pipes drain into a ditch system on the refuge. The ditch system is inadequate to handle the flow from the hatchery and the water backflows up the pipes. This backflow in the drainpipes creates sediment buildup and decrease outflow, sometimes plugging the system. The ditch also has a large amount of vegetation load that decreases the flow rate. These decreases in drain flow, in turn increases the pond drain time, drastically increasing the likelihood of ponds going anoxic and creating fish kills. These drains also create a gateway for small animals entering the facility and increases the risk of AIS species entering the facility. Additionally, the current system does not allow the refuge to simulate natural hydrologic processes such as periodically drying the wetlands to set back vegetative succession. Constant inflow artificially sustains permanent wetland habitat which is not natural for floodplain wetlands. This action is described in the Ouray NWR Habitat Management Plan ([USFWS 20 \(https://null\)](https://null) 21).

1.4.5 PROJECT TYPE AND DECONSTRUCTION

This project is a new construction project.

1.4.5.1 PROJECT MAP



LEGEND



Project footprint



Layer 1: Excavate soils/sediments, grading, trench and fill

1.4.5.2 EXCAVATE SOILS/SEDIMENTS

ACTIVITY START DATE

August 26, 2024

ACTIVITY END DATE

November 01, 2024

STRESSORS

- [Decrease in vegetation](#)
- [Change in topography](#)
- [Increase in soil compaction](#)
- [Increase in erosion](#)
- [Increase in noise](#)
- [Increase in soil disturbance](#)

DESCRIPTION

Installation of raceway and settling basin for fish culture operations will require excavation for new construction install.

1.4.5.3 GRADING

ACTIVITY START DATE

August 26, 2024

ACTIVITY END DATE

November 01, 2024

STRESSORS

- [Change in topography](#)
- [Increase in soil compaction](#)
- [Increase in erosion](#)
- [Increase in noise](#)
- [Increase in soil disturbance](#)

DESCRIPTION

Grading soil around new raceway and settling basin. Also grading trench line for new pipe.

1.4.5.4 TRENCH AND FILL

ACTIVITY START DATE

August 26, 2024

ACTIVITY END DATE

November 01, 2024

STRESSORS

This activity is not expected to have any impact on the environment.

DESCRIPTION

Area being trench and new pipe installed is around existing structure. Survey's for Yellow Billed Cuckoo will take place before construction. To date, no nesting attempts by yellow billed cuckoo have been documented on Ouray NWR.

1.4.6 ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS

Describe the anticipated effects of your proposed project on the aspects of the land, air and water that will occur due to the activities above. These should be based on the activity deconstructions done in the previous section and will be used to inform the action area.

1.4.6.1 ANIMAL FEATURES

Individuals from the Animalia kingdom, such as raptors, mollusks, and fish. This feature also includes byproducts and remains of animals (e.g., carrion, feathers, scat, etc.), and animal-related structures (e.g., dens, nests, hibernacula, etc.).

1.4.6.2 PLANT FEATURES

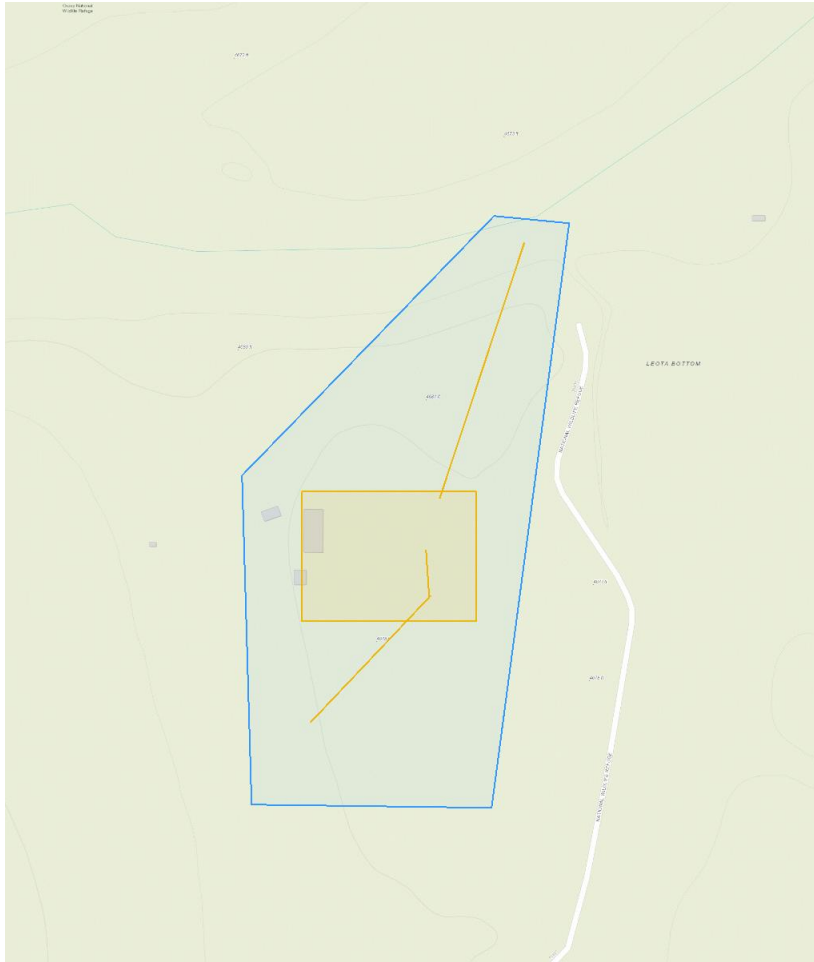
Individuals from the Plantae kingdom, such as trees, shrubs, herbs, grasses, ferns, and mosses. This feature also includes products of plants (e.g., nectar, flowers, seeds, etc.).

1.4.6.2.1 DECREASE IN VEGETATION

ANTICIPATED MAGNITUDE


Vegetation in and around the project area will be disrupted and some removed. Also, new pipe construction will impact vegetation. Construction areas will be replanted after the project is completed.

STRESSOR LOCATION



LEGEND

 Project footprint

 Stressor location

CONSERVATION MEASURES

No conservation measures for this stressor

STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

- [Excavate soils/sediments](#)

1.4.6.3 AQUATIC FEATURES

Bodies of water on the landscape, such as streams, rivers, ponds, wetlands, etc., and their physical characteristics (e.g., depth, current, etc.). This feature includes the groundwater and its characteristics. Water quality attributes (e.g., turbidity, pH, temperature, DO, nutrients, etc.) should be placed in the Environmental Quality Features.

1.4.6.4 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY FEATURES

Abiotic attributes of the landscape (e.g., temperature, moisture, slope, aspect, etc.).

1.4.6.5 LANDFORM (TOPOGRAPHIC) FEATURES

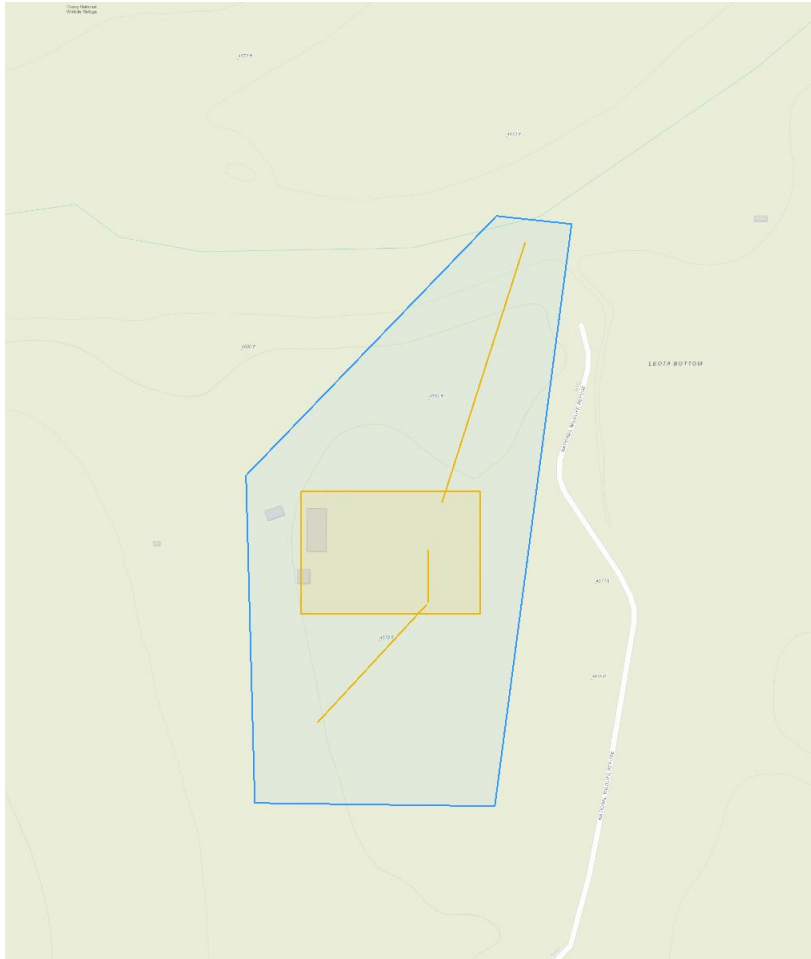
Topographic (landform) features that typically occur naturally on the landscape (e.g., cliffs, terraces, ridges, etc.). This feature does not include aquatic landscape features or man-made structures.

1.4.6.5.1 CHANGE IN TOPOGRAPHY



ANTICIPATED MAGNITUDE

New construction of raceway and settling basin will change topography. Also, some new manholes or drain line access will be added.

STRESSOR LOCATION



LEGEND

-  Project footprint
-  Stressor location

CONSERVATION MEASURES

No conservation measures for this stressor

STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

- [Grading](#)
- [Excavate soils/sediments](#)

1.4.6.6 SOIL AND SEDIMENT

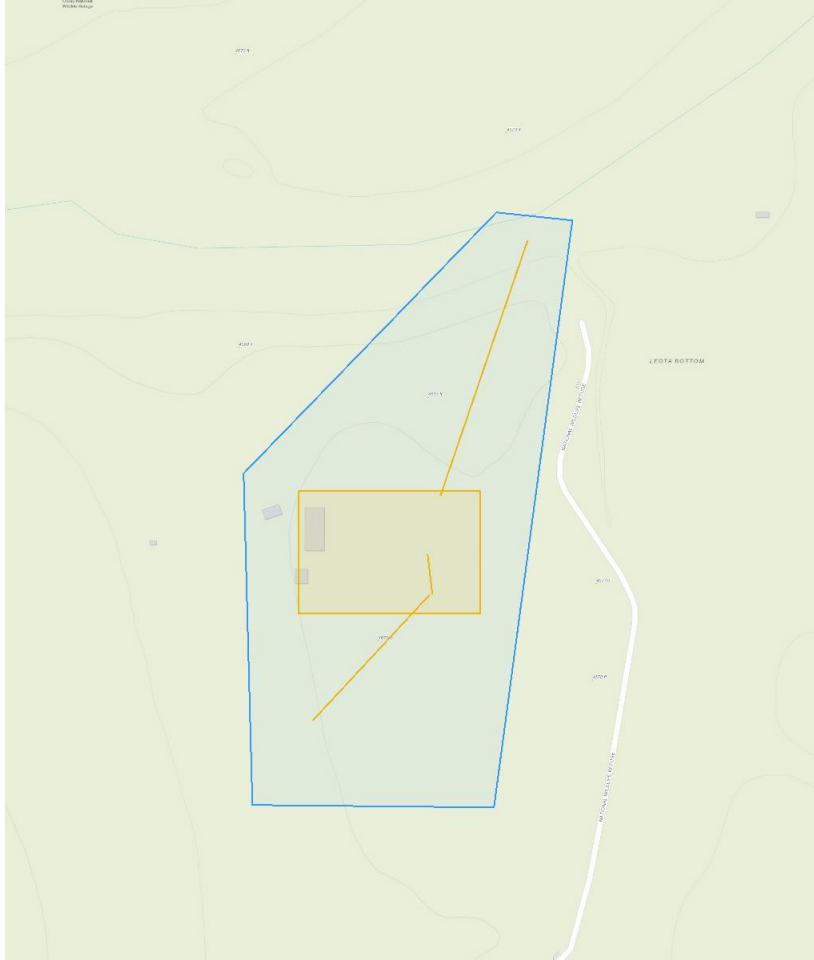
The topmost layer of earth on the landscape and its components (e.g., rock, sand, gravel, silt, etc.). This feature includes the physical characteristics of soil, such as depth, compaction, etc. Soil quality attributes (e.g, temperature, pH, etc.) should be placed in the Environmental Quality Features.

1.4.6.6.1 INCREASE IN SOIL COMPACTION



ANTICIPATED MAGNITUDE

Heavy equipment will be used for the construction. Backfilling trenches and new construction will compaction in soils.

STRESSOR LOCATION



LEGEND

-  Project footprint
-  Stressor location

CONSERVATION MEASURES

No conservation measures for this stressor

STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

- [Grading](#)
- [Excavate soils/sediments](#)

1.4.6.7 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSES

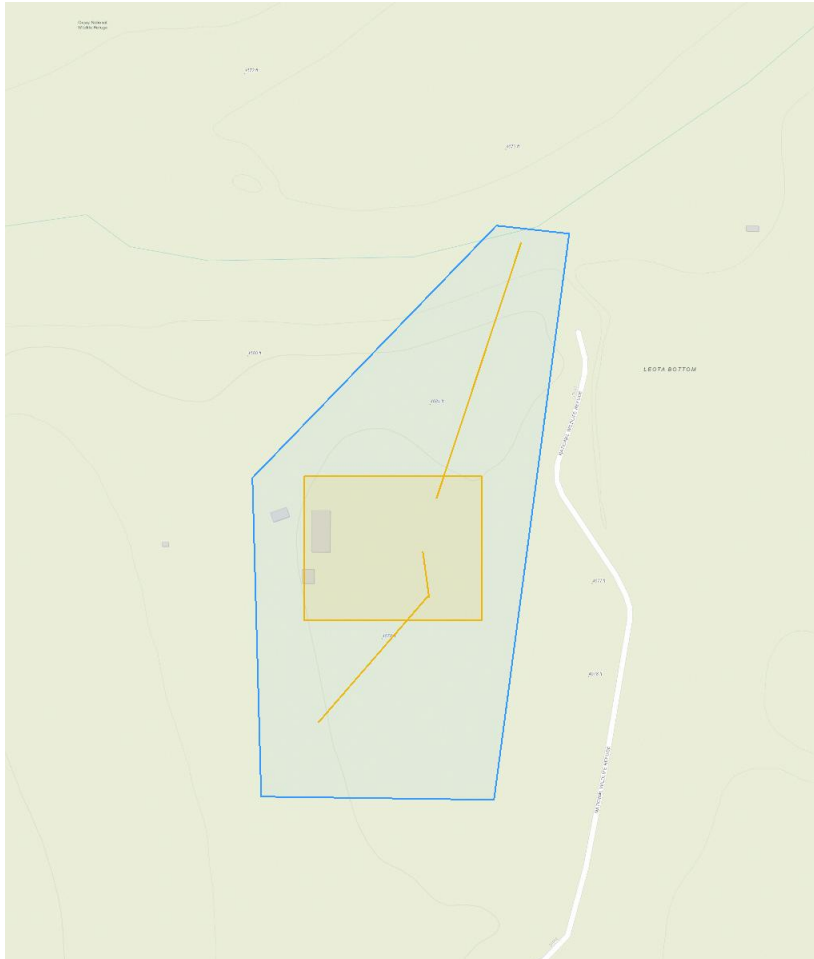
Abiotic processes that occur in the natural environment (e.g., erosion, precipitation, flood frequency, photoperiod, etc.).

1.4.6.7.1 INCREASE IN EROSION



ANTICIPATED MAGNITUDE

The area of constriction is relatively flat. Effect areas will be replanted after construction is completed.

STRESSOR LOCATION



LEGEND

-  Project footprint
-  Stressor location

CONSERVATION MEASURES

No conservation measures for this stressor

STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

- [Grading](#)
- [Excavate soils/sediments](#)

1.4.6.8 HUMAN ACTIVITIES

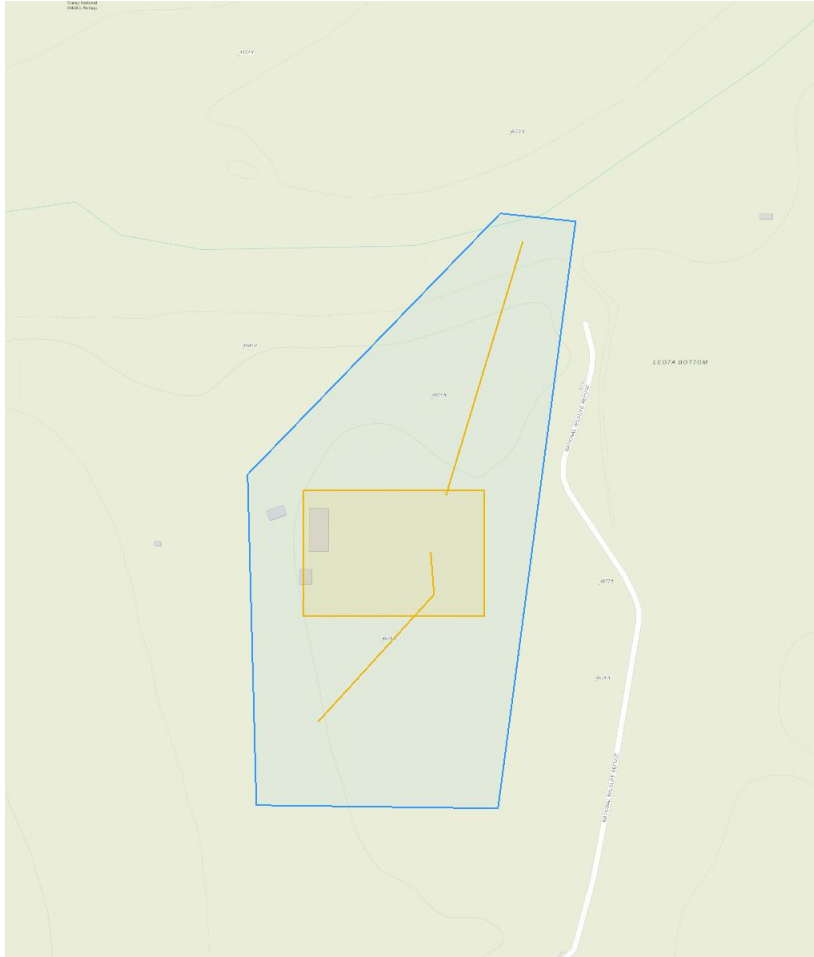
Human actions in the environment (e.g., fishing, hunting, farming, walking, etc.).

1.4.6.8.1 INCREASE IN NOISE



ANTICIPATED MAGNITUDE

Heavy Equipment noise will occur during the entire project.

STRESSOR LOCATION



LEGEND

-  Project footprint
-  Stressor location

CONSERVATION MEASURES

No conservation measures for this stressor

STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

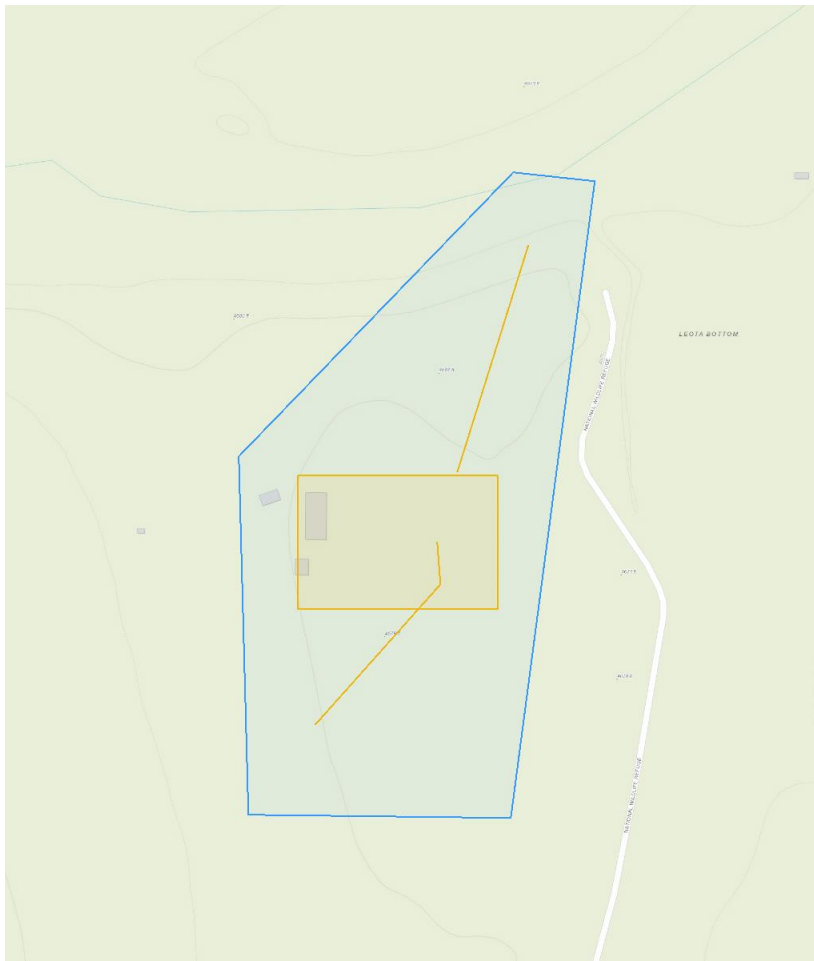
- [Grading](#)
- [Excavate soils/sediments](#)

1.4.6.8.2 INCREASE IN SOIL DISTURBANCE

ANTICIPATED MAGNITUDE


Soil will have disturbance with new construction and new pipes.

STRESSOR LOCATION



LEGEND

 Project footprint

 Stressor location

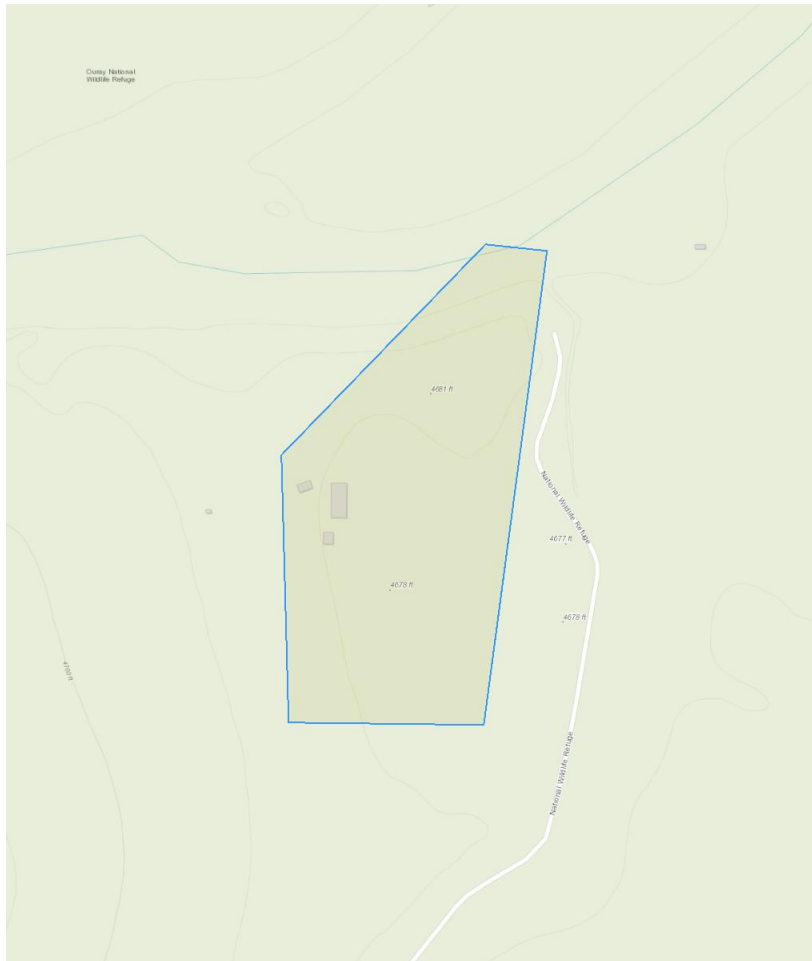
CONSERVATION MEASURES

No conservation measures for this stressor



STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

- [Grading](#)
- [Excavate soils/sediments](#)

1.5 ACTION AREA



LEGEND

-  Project footprint
-  Stressor location

1.6 CONSERVATION MEASURES

1.7 PRIOR CONSULTATION HISTORY

No previous consultation has been conducted on this project.

1.8 OTHER AGENCY PARTNERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION IS SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT THROUGH THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW FUNDING, ENGINEERING, AND CONSTRUCTION. THE BOR IS HEAVILY INVESTED IN THE OURAY NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY AND THE PRODUCTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES FOR THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM.

1.9 OTHER REPORTS AND HELPFUL INFORMATION

No additional information is needed at this point.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

- [OURAY NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY - 65 Per DESIGN](#)

2 SPECIES EFFECTS ANALYSIS

This section describes, species by species, the effects of the proposed action on listed, proposed, and candidate species, and the habitat on which they depend. In this document, effects are broken down as direct interactions (something happening directly to the species) or indirect interactions (something happening to the environment on which a species depends that could then result in effects to the species).

These interactions encompass effects that occur both during project construction and those which could be ongoing after the project is finished. All effects, however, should be considered, including effects from direct and indirect interactions and cumulative effects.

2.1 BLACK-FOOTED FERRET

This species has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

The Black-footed Ferret is not listed in the Environmental Assessment and is not a species of concern within the Ouray NWR.

Listing Status: Endangered and Experimental Population, Non-Essential

[Species Profile for Black-footed ferret\(Mustela nigripes\) \(fws.gov\) \(https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6953\)](https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6953)

2.2 BONYTAIL

This species has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

This project is land based and will have no impact on the Green River.

2.3 COLORADO PIKEMINNOW

This species has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

This project is land based and will have no impact on the Green River.

2.4 HUMPBACK CHUB

This species has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

This project is land based and will have no impact on the Green River.

2.5 MONARCH BUTTERFLY

This species has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

Monarch Butterfly was not mentioned in the Environmental Assessment and is not a concern for the Ouray NWR.

LISTING STATUS: CANDIDATE

[SPECIES PROFILE FOR MONARCH BUTTERFLY\(DANAUS PLEXIPPUS\)](https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743)
[\(FWS.GOV\) \(HTTPS://ECOS.FWS.GOV/ECP/SPECIES/9743\)](https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743)

2.6 RAZORBACK SUCKER

This species has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

This project is a land based project and will have no impact on the Green River.

2.7 UINTA BASIN HOOKLESS CACTUS

This species has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

- [Sclerocactus wetlandicus Distribtuion Ouray NWR 2024](#)

The Ouray NWR has some locations for Hookless Cactus within it's boundaries however, they are not found inside the proposed construction area.

LISTING STATUS: THREATENED

[SPECIES PROFILE FOR UINTA BASIN HOOKLESS CACTUS\(SCLEROCACTUS WETLANDICUS\) \(FWS.GOV\) \(HTTPS://ECOS.FWS.GOV/ECP/SPECIES/9037\)](#)

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

Uintah Basin hookless cactus occur in gravelly washes adjacent to the overlook area above the proposed action area. A comprehensive cactus survey was conducted concurrent to the Thurston -Ouray 2 Well EA ([USFWS 2015, as amended 2019](#)). (<https://null>) No cactus was identified in the uplands adjacent to the Ouray NFH and it is unlikely that cactus could establish in the area because of unsuitable habitat conditions for cactus establishment.

2.8 YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

2.8.1 STATUS OF THE SPECIES

This section should provide information on the species' background, its biology and life history that is relevant to the proposed project within the action area that will inform the effects analysis.

2.8.1.1 LEGAL STATUS

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is federally listed as 'Threatened' and additional information regarding its legal status can be found on the [ECOS species profile](#).

2.8.1.2 RECOVERY PLANS

Available recovery plans for the Yellow-billed Cuckoo can be found on the [ECOS species profile](#).

2.8.1.3 LIFE HISTORY INFORMATION

Yellow-billed Cuckoos are fairly large, long, and slim birds. The mostly yellow bill is almost as long as the head, thick and slightly downcurved. They have a flat head, thin body, and very long tail. Wings appear pointed and swept back in flight. Yellow-billed Cuckoos are warm brown above and clean whitish below. Their blackish face mask is accompanied by a yellow eyering. In flight, the outer part of the wings flash rufous. From below, the tail has wide white bands and narrower black ones.

References cited in Species Profile

- Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2015. Yellow-billed Cuckoo. All About Birds. http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Yellow-billed_Cuckoo/id (http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Yellow-billed_Cuckoo/id)
- Hughes, Janice M. 2015. Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/418> (<http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/418>)
- Laymon, S. A. 1998. Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). In The Riparian Bird Conservation Plan: a strategy for reversing the decline of riparian-associated birds in California. California Partners in Flight. http://www.prbo.org/calpif/htmldocs/riparian_v-2.html (http://www.prbo.org/calpif/htmldocs/riparian_v-2.html)
- Partners in Flight. 2012. Species assessment database. <http://rmbo.org/pifassessment/Database.aspx> (<http://rmbo.org/pifassessment/Database.aspx>)
- USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. 2012. North American Breeding Bird Survey 1966-2010 analysis. <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/spec10.html> (<http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/spec10.html>)

IDENTIFIED RESOURCE NEEDS

Amphibians

Type: frogs

Canopy cover

Multiple types

Cicadas

Location: southwestern u.s.

Insects

Species: primarily katydids, grasshoppers, and caterpillars

Microclimate

Location: desert southwest and range: portions of the riparian canopy that are cooler and more humid than the surrounding area

Riparian vegetation

Multiple types

Upland vegetation

Location: adjacent to, but occasionally some distance from, riparian habitat

Vegetation structure

Density: high stem density, location: desert southwest, and type: small riparian trees

2.8.1.4 CONSERVATION NEEDS

See the SharePoint site below for more info.

[https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/fws-R6-ESA-Practitioners/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?](https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/fws-R6-ESA-Practitioners/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?FolderCTID=0x012000855740A87B032E4F8E626F9D939ECFB9&id=%2Fsites%2Ffws%2DR6%2DE)

[FolderCTID=0x012000855740A87B032E4F8E626F9D939ECFB9&id=%2Fsites%2Ffws%2DR6%2DE](https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/fws-R6-ESA-Practitioners/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?FolderCTID=0x012000855740A87B032E4F8E626F9D939ECFB9&id=%2Fsites%2Ffws%2DR6%2DE)

[Forms/AllItems.aspx?](https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/fws-R6-ESA-Practitioners/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?FolderCTID=0x012000855740A87B032E4F8E626F9D939ECFB9&id=%2Fsites%2Ffws%2DR6%2DE)

[FolderCTID=0x012000855740A87B032E4F8E626F9D939ECFB9&id=%2Fsites%2Ffws%2DR6%2DE](https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/fws-R6-ESA-Practitioners/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?FolderCTID=0x012000855740A87B032E4F8E626F9D939ECFB9&id=%2Fsites%2Ffws%2DR6%2DE)

2.8.2 ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

*The environmental baseline describes the species' health **within the action area only** at the time of the consultation, and does not include the effects of the action under review. Unlike the species information provided above, the environmental baseline is at the scale of the Action area.*

2.8.2.1 SPECIES PRESENCE AND USE

While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

- [YBCUdetections 01-16-2013](#)
- [YBCU suitable habitat](#)

2.8.2.2 SPECIES CONSERVATION NEEDS WITHIN THE ACTION AREA

The federally listed yellow-billed cuckoo feeds, rests, and potentially nests in cottonwood galleries in the riparian areas of the refuge. To date, no nesting attempts by yellow billed cuckoo have been documented on Ouray NWR. There is no cottonwood galleries in the proposed construction areas.

2.8.2.3 HABITAT CONDITION (GENERAL)

CANOPY COVER (MULTIPLE TYPES)

Semidesert Shrubland: Approximately 2,669 acres of semi-desert shrubland cover the refuge. Greasewood, rubber and low rabbitbrush, spiny hopsage, shadscale, fourwing saltbush, winterfat, big sagebrush, bud sagebrush, black sagebrush, Indian ricegrass, needle- and-thread, sand dropseed, and non-native cheatgrass occur on this upland habitat type. This habitat also supports the state and federally threatened Uintah Basin hookless cactus. Semi-desert shrubland habitat is scattered within the boundary of the refuge, but generally occurs in the transition zone between riparian areas and the clay bluffs. **Grassland:** Alkali sacaton, inland saltgrass, western wheatgrass, Great Basin wildrye, desert paintbrush, and Nelson and scarlet globemallow can be found in the 1,520 acres of grassland that occur on the refuge. This habitat, like semi-desert shrublands, is scattered within the boundary of the refuge, but generally occurs above the clay bluffs on what is locally referred to as a bench.

Both Semidesert Shrubland and Grasslands are within the project area.

INSECTS (SPECIES: PRIMARILY KATYDIDS, GRASSHOPPERS, AND CATERPILLARS)

The habitat within the project is considered riparian and is habitat for many insect species. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo.

MICROCLIMATE (LOCATION: DESERT SOUTHWEST AND RANGE: PORTIONS OF THE RIPARIAN CANOPY THAT ARE COOLER AND MORE HUMID THAN THE SURROUNDING AREA)

New construction will disrupt some riparian habitat. Replanting will of native vegetation will occur after the project is completed.

RIPARIAN VEGETATION (MULTIPLE TYPES)

The construction area as some riparian vegetation.

UPLAND VEGETATION (LOCATION: ADJACENT TO, BUT OCCASIONALLY SOME DISTANCE FROM, RIPARIAN HABITAT)

Within the 3 acre project are approximately 2 acres of upland vegetation will be effected.

VEGETATION STRUCTURE (DENSITY: HIGH STEM DENSITY, LOCATION: DESERT SOUTHWEST, AND TYPE: SMALL RIPARIAN TREES)

Within the 37 acer project area upland vegetation structure is relatively spaced out.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- [YBCU suitable habitat](#)

2.8.2.4 INFLUENCES

The federally listed yellow-billed cuckoo feeds, rests, and potentially nests in cottonwood galleries in the riparian areas of the refuge. To date, no nesting attempts by yellow billed cuckoo have been documented on Ouray NWR. There is no cottonwood galleries in the proposed construction areas.

2.8.2.5 ADDITIONAL BASELINE INFORMATION

While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.

2.8.3 EFFECTS OF THE ACTION

This section considers and discusses all effects on the listed species that are caused by the proposed action and are reasonably certain to occur, including the effects of other activities that would not occur but for the proposed action.

2.8.3.1 INDIRECT INTERACTIONS

RESOURCE NEED	STRESSORS	CONSERVATION MEASURES	AMOUNT OF RESOURCE IMPACTED	INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED
Amphibians (type: frogs)			<i>This resource is not present in the action area</i> This is a land base project. No flooded area's will be effects.	<i>There will be no impacts to this resource, so no individuals will be affected.</i>
Canopy cover (multiple types)	Decrease in vegetation Increase in soil disturbance Change in topography Increase in soil compaction		While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term	<i>No individuals will be affected</i> The riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur

RESOURCE NEED	STRESSORS	CONSERVATION MEASURES	AMOUNT OF RESOURCE IMPACTED	INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED
			<p>disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area. Minimal Semidesert Shrubland and Grasslands will be effect and will be replanted after the project is compleated.</p>	<p>towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.</p>
<p>Cicadas (location: southwestern u.s.)</p>			<p><i>This resource is not present in the action area</i></p> <p>Cicadas lifespan of the adult is relatively brief. After spending one to several years as a soft-bodied nymph, mating and egg-laying take place in a few weeks to a month. Females have a solid like ovipositor at the tip of their abdomen to cut through slits into the new shoots on trees and shrubs, where she inserts her eggs.</p> <p>After hatching, young nymphs fall to the ground and burrow into the soil to find tender routes for feeding.</p> <p>The construction area is outside the yellow-billed cuckoo critical habitat there is no concerns on</p>	<p><i>There will be no impacts to this resource, so no individuals will be affected.</i></p>

RESOURCE NEED	STRESSORS	CONSERVATION MEASURES	AMOUNT OF RESOURCE IMPACTED	INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED
			impacting the cicadas if they are present.	
Insects (species: primarily katydids, grasshoppers, and caterpillars)	Decrease in vegetation Increase in soil disturbance Change in topography Increase in soil compaction Increase in erosion		While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season.	While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.
Microclimate (location: desert southwest and range: portions of the riparian canopy that are cooler and more humid than the surrounding area)	Decrease in vegetation Increase in soil disturbance Change in topography Increase in soil compaction Increase in erosion		Construction includes new raceway and settling basin, along with new drain lines going to the river.	The project are is around 37 acres. Within the project area, approximately 2 acers will be affected.
Riparian vegetation (multiple types)	Decrease in vegetation Increase in soil disturbance Change in topography		Within the 37 acre project area approximately 2 acres will be disturbed and replanted.	While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is

RESOURCE NEED	STRESSORS	CONSERVATION MEASURES	AMOUNT OF RESOURCE IMPACTED	INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED
	Increase in soil compaction Increase in erosion			<p>considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will be halted until the pair has left the area.</p>
<p>Upland vegetation (location: adjacent to, but occasionally some distance from, riparian habitat)</p>	Decrease in vegetation Increase in soil disturbance Change in topography Increase in soil compaction Increase in erosion		<p>Within the 3 acre project are approximately 2 acres of upland vegetation will be effected.</p>	<p>While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within</p>

RESOURCE NEED	STRESSORS	CONSERVATION MEASURES	AMOUNT OF RESOURCE IMPACTED	INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED
				the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.
Vegetation structure (density: high stem density, location: desert southwest, and type: small riparian trees)	Decrease in vegetation Increase in soil disturbance Change in topography Increase in soil compaction Increase in erosion		Within the 37 acer project area, approximately 2 acres of upland vegetation will be effected and replanted after the project is completed.	While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.

2.8.3.2 DIRECT INTERACTIONS

No direct interactions leading to effects on species are expected to occur from the proposed project.

2.8.4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

No future state or private activities are anticipated at this time.

2.8.5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

DETERMINATION: [NLAA](#)

COMPENSATION MEASURES

While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

- [YBCUdetections 01-16-2013](#)
- [YBCU suitable habitat](#)

3 CRITICAL HABITAT EFFECTS ANALYSIS

3.1 COLORADO PIKEMINNOW CRITICAL HABITAT

This critical habitat has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

This is a land based project and will not effect the green river.

3.2 RAZORBACK SUCKER CRITICAL HABITAT

This critical habitat has been excluded from analysis in this environmental review document.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSION

This is a land based project and will not effect the green river.

3.3 YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO CRITICAL HABITAT

3.3.1 CRITICAL HABITAT DESCRIPTION

Critical habitat has been designated for the '**Yellow-billed Cuckoo**', the final rule can be found at [ECOS species profile](#). The rule outlines required physical and biological features needed for critical habitat to be present.

3.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

The environmental baseline describes the condition of the critical habitat within the action area only at the time of the consultation, and does not include the effects of the action under review.

3.3.2.1 CONDITION OF PHYSICAL AND BIOLOGICAL FEATURES

You indicated that Yellow-billed Cuckoo critical habitat is present in your action area it in the following manner.

While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

- [YBCUdetections 01-16-2013](#)
- [YBCU suitable habitat](#)

3.3.2.2 CONSERVATION NEEDS OF PHYSICAL AND BIOLOGICAL FEATURES

While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.

3.3.2.3 INFLUENCES

Since the early 90', the Ouray NFH has operated in the area. Hatchery operation include maintance, mowing vegetation, spraying weeds, and fixing and repairing drain lines and water supply lines around the hatchery.

3.3.2.4 ADDITIONAL BASELINE INFORMATION

No

3.3.3 EFFECTS OF THE ACTION

No stressors are expected to impact Yellow-billed Cuckoo critical habitat.

3.3.4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

No anticipated future state or private activities at this time.

3.3.5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

DETERMINATION: NE

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

- [YBCUdetections 01-16-2013](#)
- [YBCU suitable habitat](#)

4 SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1 SUMMARY DISCUSSION

Overall this project will have no low to impacts on species or critical habitat within the construction area.

4.2 CONCLUSION

Alternative A - Move Forward With Construction Uintah Basin hookless cactus occur in gravelly washes adjacent to the overlook area above the proposed action area. A comprehensive cactus survey was conducted concurrent to the Thurston -Ouray 2 Well EA (USFWS 2015, as amended 2019). No cactus was identified in the uplands adjacent to the Ouray NFH and it is unlikely that cactus could establish in the area because of unsuitable habitat conditions for cactus establishment.

While nesting yellow billed cuckoo have not been documented on Ouray NWR, they do use riparian habitat for migration. Additionally, the riparian corridor is considered critical habitat for nesting with the season typically running from June 15 until August 31. While there could be short term disturbance from excavating the pipeline corridor, it is anticipated that this action would occur towards the end of the nesting season and would cause minimal impact to nesting cuckoo. To minimize the chance of disturbance, a survey will be conducted to ensure that nesting is not occurring within the project area. If a nesting pair of cuckoo is documented, construction will halted until the pair has left the area.

The federally endangered Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker, and the state-threatened roundtail chub, can be found within the refuge's stretch of the Green River. Ouray National Fish Hatchery is augmenting the extant populations of these fish that occur on the refuge and next to the refuge. Razorback suckers are propagated for 1.5-years in the hatchery, and then released into the Green River above, on, and below the refuge. Bonytail are propagated for 2-years in the hatchery and then released into the Green River in similar locations as the razorback sucker. Depending on the year, both razorback sucker's and bonytail's are stocked into flooded wetlands and/or flooded bottoms. In addition, efforts are being coordinated through the Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and other agencies to mimic natural river flows that may aid in the recovery of these species that are on the brink of extinction. Overall, no impacts on any of the listed species in this Section 7 would be negatively impacted. Alternative B - Move Forward Without Construction Under the no action alternative, cactus would continue to thrive in gravelly washes, on the bluffs above the hatchery. It is unlikely that they would expand into the uplands around the hatchery based on the soil type and related habitat suitability. The yellow-billed cuckoo would continue to use the riparian corridor near the hatchery for migration habitat and the riparian corridor would continue to be protected, critical habitat for nesting yellow-billed cuckoo.

The Ouray Nation Fish Hatchery would continue as in years past propagating and stocking 6,000 razorback sucks and 10,000 bonytail for the Upper Colorado River Endanger Fish Recovery Program annually. The hatchery would also continue holding backup brood of humpback chub and razorback suckers. Discharge would continue at an annual average rate of 1.5 cfs and semi-permanent – permanent conditions would continue in Leota Unit 4. The hatchery will not have the needed infrastructure in place for expansion if needs arise for additional struggling species in the future.

You have indicated that your project falls under or receives funding through the following special project authorities:

- BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW (BIL) (OTHER)